

March 26, 1999

Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)

Food and Drug Administration

5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061

Rockville, MD 20852

3129 '99 APR -5 AM '58

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing in response to the USDA's request for comments on Docket #98N-1038, "Irradiation in the Production, Processing and Handling of Food." As a consumer, I urge you to continue using the current labeling rules for irradiated foods. Please reject the current attempt to have labeling requirements changed or removed at some set point in the future.

Consumers have the right to know what they are buying when they go to the supermarket. Irradiated foods may have important differences than non-irradiated food. For instance, irradiation can alter food by changing the taste. More crucially, irradiation can diminish the vitamin content in foods.

I think that changing "irradiation" to a term such as "cold pasteurization" is deliberately misleading to consumers. "Cold pasteurization" is a euphemistic description of the process that irradiated foods undergo. In an effort to stymie "inappropriate anxiety" the USDA could, in fact, foster ignorance by changing the labeling terms. That would be a great disservice to consumers. Consumers should understand irradiation and be able to make informed choices about the food they buy.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Vogt

1402 Regent St. #332

Madison, WI 53711

98N-1038

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Jennifer Vogt
1402 Regent St #332
Madison, WI 53711



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